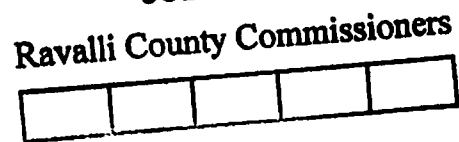


RECEIVED

July 23, 2007

JUL 24 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners
215 South 4th Street Suite E
Hamilton, Montana 59840



RE: Public Hearing as regards to the Planned Reopening of Lost Horse Quarry

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners,

I was just going to write to Commissioner Driscoll, because we share the same concerns of impact. With more afterthoughts, I realized that some of the other commissioners had indirectly expressed concerns as well. I will attempt to address some of those concerns now.

Impact to the canyon by various users is a fact of life, and I am disturbed by this as much as anyone. Climbers as a whole are considered to be one of the most conservation minded user groups you will find in the great outdoors. There are few groups of climbers who have worried more about future impacts than those found right here in Western Montana. Just like anglers are secretive about their best holes, climbers have stayed away from announcing to the world what we have in our own backyard. We realized that publicity brings popularity, with popularity comes crowds, and then these impacts need to be managed. However, with the imposing threat of the dangers of an active quarry looming, we have become painfully aware of the fact that the only way to save what we have is to let the world know exactly what we stand to lose. That is why we as a climbing group are succumbing to the desires of those who have dreamed of publishing this information for years.

The Lost Horse climbing area is a traditional climbing crag and is unique in that very minimal "fixed gear" is needed. Most climbs only require "coming" devices that leave no trace and are taken out by the following climber. Climbing impact at this site is far less significant compared to most others climbing crags throughout the world.

I believe that we all have a unique opportunity to do what is right for Lost Horse Canyon, which is, more effectively manage what is already being neglected. You currently have the attention of several groups who are willing to work with the Forest Service volunteering their time, energy and resources. One important thing that I believe Commissioner Driscoll might be failing to realize is that the majority of the impact being felt on federal and state lands actually comes from locals. The fact that Lost Horse Canyon is seeing more traffic than before is largely due the rapid growth in western Montana.

At the hearing today, Commissioner Driscoll spoke of the overcrowding and impacts from people at Lost Horse last weekend. I also spent Sunday in Lost Horse Canyon and passed every car from Twin Lakes to Lost Horse Lodge throughout the day as I slowly fished my way down the creek. The majority of Sunday visitors were, in fact, locals.

Most campers had packed up and left the canyon before one o'clock. I saw three out of state plates, one from Missoula County and the rest were all from Ravalli County, and most people were picking huckleberries. My point is that, the impacts that seem to disturb you the most are simply a result of current growth problems and management policies of Ravalli County and the Forest Service.

If you are truly concerned with impacts, this proposal would have never made it this far, and you would also realize this is your best chance to get help resolving impact issues currently at hand.

The reason that Commissioner Thompson, has never heard of climbing at Lost Horse is because all but one of the routes saw first accents beginning in 1996. You will also find a new climbing guide for western Montana that list numerous climbs that no one felt the need to publish before this most recent environmental threat.

Comments regarding this proposal, and the concerns of citizens, made by Commissioner Chilcott, were utterly disturbing. You said you are basing your decision on the expert's opinions. Yet the opinions of retired engineers and the opinions of local quarry owners who are willing to discuss their concerns with the Commission seem to be largely ignored as they are in direct opposition with your own unsubstantiated findings. The proposal does not list a stated use of the material which is required and more importantly lists almost no factual findings or analysis. Terminology is vague throughout, allowing several interpretations. Alternative sites have not been analyzed, and the County should be focusing on finding a long term solution for their gravel and chip seal needs, without destroying a national treasure.

I believe we can still procure the RAC funds I spoke of earlier today. Time is of the essence. By not killing this proposal today, the likelihood of these funds being used elsewhere increases with each passing day. Ranger Oliver wishes to hold off from having a meeting to discuss using these funds until the County makes a decision to abandon this proposal.

It would be unfortunate if the Forest Service's public comment period ends with no resolution in sight, and the taxpayer's hard earned money will go toward defending an ill conceived proposal. A proposal that is currently opposed by each and every person I have personally talked to, (who is not personally involved in the proposal itself). Please work with us and base your decisions on facts, not opinions. Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly review this issue.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Pinjuv
355 Oertli Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840